

Hodges received the Combat Infantry Badge, the World War II Victory Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, and the Army Good Conduct Medal. Surprisingly, Sgt. Hodges, who was also awarded the Bronze and Silver Stars, never actually received those medals due to a paperwork glitch. After my office's personal inquiry on his behalf last September, I'm happy to report that Mr. Arthur Hodges will be presented his Bronze and Silver Stars by me on March 13—some 52 years after he earned them. I congratulate Mr. Hodges and am very proud to have played a part in seeing him finally receive the decorations which he has so long merited and deserved.

10 FOR 60 RESOLUTION REAL TAX REFORM IN 1998

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 11, 1998

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the "10 for 60" Resolution. My resolution directs the Internal Revenue Service and Congress to begin this year the process of cutting in half the time that it takes the average taxpayer to file their tax returns. As the first step, the "10 for 60" Resolution calls for 10 changes in law or regulation this year to cut 60 minutes from tax preparation time. The "10 for 60" Resolution intends that these proposals should be revenue neutral and should focus on changes that benefit as large a group of taxpayers as possible.

Today, it takes too long for the average taxpayer to file their taxes. In fact, the American taxpayer is taxed twice. Not only do we pay our taxes, but our time is taxed as well. At this time of year, instead of spending time with our families, working around the home, or just taking a break, we spend hour after hour punching numbers into a calculator, trying to decipher IRS directions and tables, and searching through our financial records to find that last receipt for a charitable contribution that we made.

According to the IRS, this annual spring exercise will take the average taxpayer 15 hours and 47 minutes to prepare and file a typical tax return (Form 1040 and Schedules A and B). Add in other forms, such as Schedule C, the business profit and loss schedule, and the total time for tax compliance can be in excess of 30 hours.

There are plenty of examples of ways that we can simplify tax code now. The mileage deduction was intended to help not only those with business expenses, but individuals with medical, charitable and moving travel costs. However, the tax code contains three separate reimbursement rates for travel. Why should a taxpayer be required to keep three separate records for using the same car?

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), designed to help low income families and reward work, is good policy. In fact, an analysis by the non-partisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, reveals that the EITC "lifts more children out of poverty than any other government program." Yet, this single credit has been changed twelve times in the past 20 years. The credit contains nine eligibility standards and could require one checklist, two worksheets, one schedule and a normal 1040 to complete.

Congress has many ideas on tax reform or changes. At last count, over 600 separate bills to amend the Internal Revenue Code have been introduced in this Congress. These proposals range from broad reform to very narrow modifications. The major proposals, a flat tax or a national sales tax, do have hidden repercussions. While some taxpayers may like the idea of simplifying the tax code, they do not support the elimination of crucial deductions, like the home mortgage interest deduction or the charitable contribution nor do they support the taxation of worker fringe benefits like health insurance coverage or taxing services like a free checking account. Furthermore, true simplification should make the tax law understandable and workable, deflecting wholesale, imprudent changes while retaining sound, proven tax policies.

Congress should focus on what the taxpayers really need—true tax simplification. Concrete proposals already exist to simplify the existing tax code with minimal revenue changes. The House included in the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act the requirement that any new tax legislation include a complexity analysis before enactment. Why not apply such an analysis to existing provisions of law?

Tax simplification this year is an achievable goal but not if Congress gets bogged down in debating unrealistic proposals to abolish the tax code or initiate other radical changes. These are Trojan horses being advanced as tax simplification. It is time to address real tax simplification as more than a rhetorical tool and to make it a policy priority. My "10 for 60" resolution places the American taxpayer, not politics, first by focusing on real, attainable tax simplification for this year. My resolution gives everyone something they need more of—time. I hope that my Colleagues will join with me in making tax simplification a reality in 1998.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. JASON BINKLEY FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 11, 1998

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues the name of Jason Binkley, of Ephrata, PA, in my congressional district. Jason is a member of Boy Scout Troop 38 in Ephrata. On Sunday, March 15, 1998, he will be receiving one of scouting's highest honors, the Eagle Scout Award. For this wonderful achievement we in the United States House of Representatives salute this fine young man.

To receive his Eagle Scout Award, Jason was required to complete a project that was of service to his community. Jason's project was renovating the amphitheater at the Ephrata Cloister. He was responsible for replacing the 400 bench seats, which had deteriorated from the years of being exposed to the elements, with new preserved wood tops. Jason accomplished this by raising funds locally and recruiting 20 other scouts who helped Jason with all of the cutting, bolting, and cleaning necessary to complete the project. Jason and his recruits donated over 120 hours of their time to complete the renovation of the Ephrata Cloister.

Again, I would like to congratulate Jason for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. I know he worked hard and with great self-determination to earn this distinguished honor. I am honored to have such a fine young man in my district who is willing to donate himself to the community. I wish Jason the best of luck in all of his future endeavors and trust that he will continue to make his family, friends, and this Member of Congress proud of him.

HONORING THE HOPE EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP FUND ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 7TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH SYMPOSIUM

HON. ESTEBAN EDWARD TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 11, 1998

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize HOPE Education and Leadership Fund on the occasion of its 7th Annual Symposium to be held on Friday, March 13, 1998 in Los Angeles, California.

For the past seven years, the HOPE Education Leadership Fund has provided a collective voice for Latinas by ensuring quality representation in the political process and in the public and private sectors. HOPE has encouraged political education of its members by conducting effective workshops, unique seminars and challenging training forums, informing the community on critical issues affecting Latinas.

At its annual symposium, HOPE and its members have the opportunity to analyze and talk about issues relevant to Latinas. HOPE's annual symposium is held every March, in honor of Women's History Month. The Symposium explores those issues facing Latinas. Among the issues HOPE explores range from health care and business development to domestic violence.

The annual symposium also recognizes Latina role models from throughout our history, highlighting those women who have excelled in their respective fields and serve as role models for younger Latinas. It is the tradition of the HOPE Education and Leadership Fund to present the Gift of HOPE Award to a Latina in recognition of her outstanding achievements and accomplishments in her field. This year's Gift of HOPE Award will be presented to Corina Alarcon, Executive Director of WAVE. By witnessing this form of recognition, younger generations become proud of their heritage and are encouraged to continue pursuing a professional career.

In 1994, the HOPE Education and Leadership Fund introduced the Ray HOPE Award. This award is given to individuals within our community who have demonstrated outstanding achievements as members of HOPE, either by giving back to the Latino community or in their professional achievements. This year, the Ray of HOPE Award will be presented to Maria Elena Salinas, Noticiero Univision anchor.

In 1993, the HOPE Education and Leadership Fund began the publication of its newsletter entitled *HOPE Agenda*. The printing of the publication coincides with the Annual Symposium and is used to relate news and information about HOPE activities to members and